

The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce was established to provide leadership by promoting economic vitality, community development and a positive image of Merced. In order to achieve this, we must identify important issues, establish collaborative efforts in the interest of business and influence the public policy that affects our mission. One such policy, about which I am writing to you today, is competition in long distance.

The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce hopes that the Federal Communications Commission would enact policies and regulations that add to competition, not hinder it. In order to do this, the market must be open to competitors. Especially now that such major consolidation is taking place in this market, it is important that competition be enhanced, in order to lower prices and create more choices. Our businesses, as well as residents, will benefit from real competition.

SBC Pacific Bell's long distance application has undergone numerous hearings, reviews, testing, and filings over the past four years. Some 23 states have approved application and received FCC approval-millions of Americans are benefiting from increased telecommunications competition. Our members, and Californians as a whole, should be next.

We hope you will support our long-standing mission to create a business-friendly environment and allow SBC Pacific Bell to compete for long distance.

Thank you,

Don Bergman  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce